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THE DECORATOR AND FURNISHER.

\$400.00, HOW IT WILL FURNISH A HOME.

BY N. S. STOWELL.

A COMFORTABLE bank account is one of the most convenient of possessions if one is about to fit up or furnish a house, but it is by no means as necessary as many persons seem to imagine. A fair share of ingenuity, tact and good judgment are quite as important, and the ability to see utility in a hitherto useless article, and to make from unpromising materials something really elegant and available, will produce results that are not obtainable by money alone. Everybody with money can buy beautiful things, but to arrange them in artistic fashion and to create unique and desirable articles out of raw material, is a gift vouchsafed to but very few.

The average householder, when beginning housekeeping, usually makes one very serious mistake. In making up estimates for the necessities of such an undertaking, the kitchen, storerooms and cellar are almost entirely overlooked, and when the available funds are almost or altogether exhausted, a flood of inquiries for kitchen furnishings descend upon the holder of the purse strings, and the cries for pots, pans, tubs and kettles hold uninterrupted carnival about his ears until provision is made for them. It is too often the case that this department must wait until the exchequer can be replenished, greatly to the inconvenience of those members of the household upon whom domestic duties fall. It is really out of the power of husbands and fathers to realize the inconvenience of having but a few utensils, and how everything about the culinary affairs of the establishment may be delayed by the absence of a few comparatively inexpensive articles.

The result of recent estimates on the cost of furnishing a home will be interesting and useful to persons who are about fitting up a dwelling, and will serve as a guide to those who would like to know the ordinary cost of outfits of various sorts required for housekeeping by persons with small to moderate and comfortable means. The stationary range usually has no fixtures other than a lifter, poker, and the iron for shaking the grate. This necessitates a full supply of iron and tin ware. The heavy, cumbersome and inconvenient iron kettles and pots of our grandmothers have, to a great extent, given way to the everyday more desirable agate or block tin utensils that are much lighter, quite as cleanly, all things considered, and more durable, as iron ware is quite apt to crack in very cold weather, and is then hopelessly injured.

Good block tin is not specially expensive, and except for cooking very acid fruits is available for preparing all kinds of dishes. Agate ware has been the subject of a great deal of discussion, and some persons are still so prejudiced that they will eat nothing that has been cooked in it. While too much care cannot be taken to avoid all injurious compositions, it may be stated that there are some kinds of this ware that are entirely safe as far as any chemical action in them is concerned.

The judicious housewife who caters to a small, private family need not require a very elaborate outfit for her task. It is a great mistake to have too many utensils about a kitchen. The few that are required should be selected with due regard for their several purposes, and a couple of extra sized dishes may be held in reserve for emergencies. Parties who are within reach of metropolitan markets may fit up a small kitchen with utensils and laundry outfit for about \$25. From this figure there may be a steady increase up to \$100 by adding articles of various sorts, and selecting better grades in all of them. For \$35 to \$40 any ordinary kitchen and laundry may be completely stocked with articles of good quality, including kitchen table and two or three plain chairs. This does not take in the kitchen range, which cost \$18 to \$50, according to size and finish.

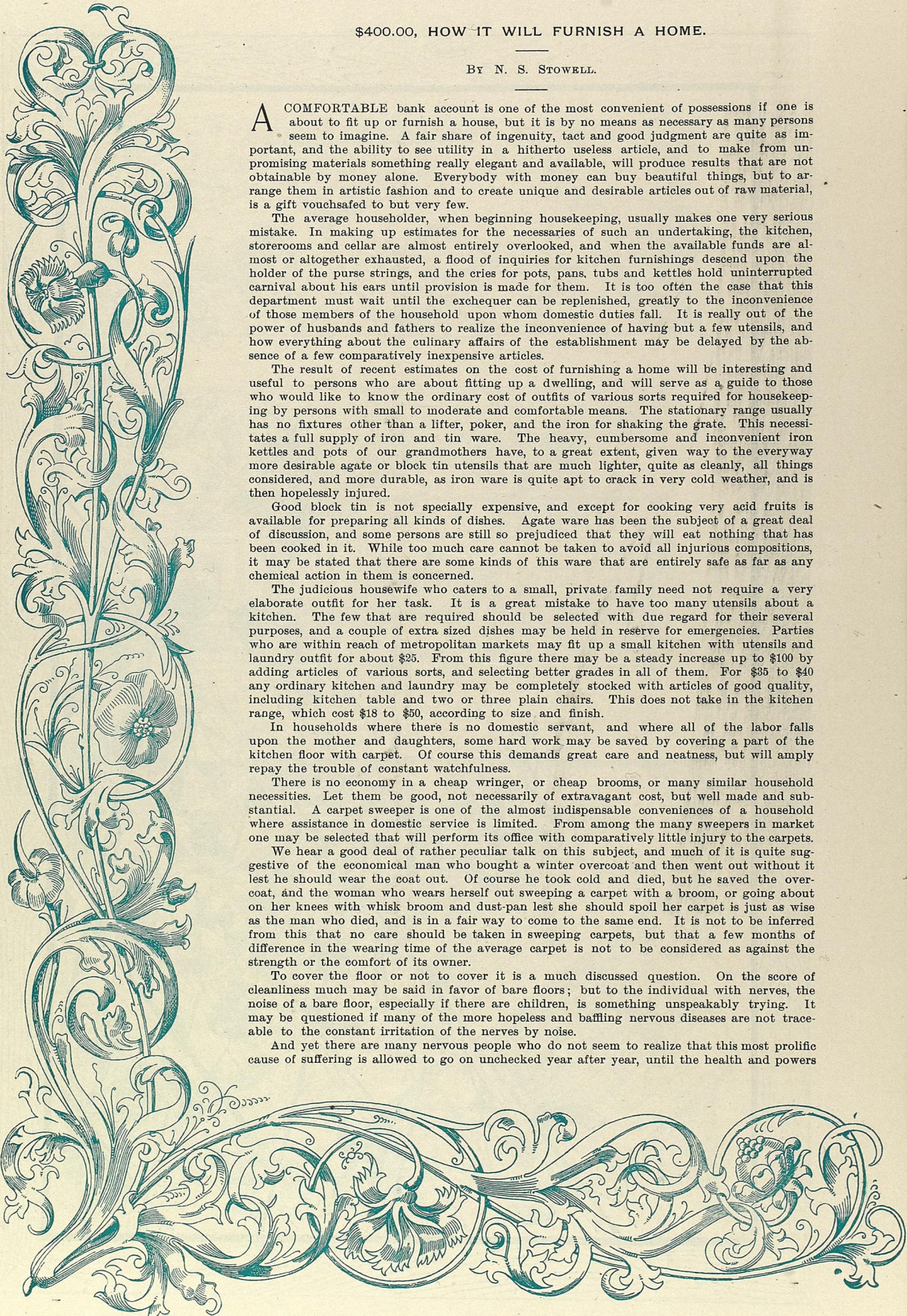
In households where there is no domestic servant, and where all of the labor falls upon the mother and daughters, some hard work may be saved by covering a part of the kitchen floor with carpet. Of course this demands great care and neatness, but will amply repay the trouble of constant watchfulness.

There is no economy in a cheap wringer, or cheap brooms, or many similar household necessities. Let them be good, not necessarily of extravagant cost, but well made and substantial. A carpet sweeper is one of the almost indispensable conveniences of a household where assistance in domestic service is limited. From among the many sweepers in market one may be selected that will perform its office with comparatively little injury to the carpets.

We hear a good deal of rather peculiar talk on this subject, and much of it is quite suggestive of the economical man who bought a winter overcoat and then went out without it lest he should wear the coat out. Of course he took cold and died, but he saved the overcoat, and the woman who wears herself out sweeping a carpet with a broom, or going about on her knees with whisk broom and dust-pan lest she should spoil her carpet is just as wise as the man who died, and is in a fair way to come to the same end. It is not to be inferred from this that no care should be taken in sweeping carpets, but that a few months of difference in the wearing time of the average carpet is not to be considered as against the strength or the comfort of its owner.

To cover the floor or not to cover it is a much discussed question. On the score of cleanliness much may be said in favor of bare floors; but to the individual with nerves, the noise of a bare floor, especially if there are children, is something unspeakably trying. It may be questioned if many of the more hopeless and baffling nervous diseases are not traceable to the constant irritation of the nerves by noise.

And yet there are many nervous people who do not seem to realize that this most prolific cause of suffering is allowed to go on unchecked year after year, until the health and powers



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of endurance are alike destroyed. One of the most sensible of women always had a couple of very thick rugs to put upon the floor between the range and the table on ironing day. She said she could do almost double the work, not only that her nerves were saved the annoyance of the sound of her shoes upon the bare floor, but that she had a cushion to stand on while she worked.

In almost every large hotel there is a spring board behind the office counter. Many persons suppose the object of this to be the raising of the feet from contact with the tile floor. This is an important item, but if this same board were covered with stair pads and a Wilton or other thick carpet, the weariness so taxing to the health and strength would be very perceptibly decreased.

Ironing day would be robbed of many of its terrors if some little forethought were taken and judgment used to make the task easier. Instead of that the work is done in almost precisely the same manner as it was a couple of score of years ago. This is folly, and worthy only of the old conservative fashion of the man who reproved his son, because when starting for the mill with the bags of grain, he divided the corn in two parts to hang the bag over the horse's back. His father, he said, always put a stone in one end of the bag, and old ways were good enough for him. Such persons should be allowed to go their own way if they must, but the rising generation may be congratulated that they do not desire to carry heavy stones to mill.

Get an office stool and have the legs sawed off until the stool makes a seat just high enough to sit upon by the ironing board. In doing all small pieces one may sit at the board with the greatest advantage and comfort.

The minor conveniences of the household mean much in the fitting up of the home. They often turn the scale for sickness or health, and make the daily labors easy or an almost unbearable burden.

Provision for conveniences in the store rooms and cellar should not be neglected. What housewife of limited means cannot recall hours of time wasted in trying to find or prepare suitable vessels in which to put her pickles, or marmalade, or the poverty of teacups and tumblers at jelly time, when every available glass and china article that would hold jelly or catsup has been filled, and the cry for more has resulted in the use of vases from the parlor mantel when all other sources of supply were exhausted. The time of even a farmer's wife is too valuable to waste in the task of cleansing old bottles and dishes in which to put her sweetmeats and sauces, and the trifling cost of necessary receptacles should not be considered in comparison with her hours of labor and her strength. All of these articles, trifling in themselves but of great importance in daily work, can be provided at a cost not to exceed ten dollars, and every thoughtful person must agree that the amount could not be invested to better advantage.

The dining-room of a small house may be comfortably furnished for \$65 cash outlay. It is often the case that there is a carpet from one of the other rooms that will answer all purposes. This will reduce the cost of the dining-room furnishing considerably, as the carpet is quite likely to be one of the most expensive items. Made into a rug a sufficient amount of carpet to cover the middle of the floor may be had for \$20. A plain walnut table will cost \$8 with two extra leaves. A plain side-board can be bought for \$15. Six good chairs will cost \$12, cheaper ones but not as reliable may be had for \$10. A lamp will cost from \$3 up to all sorts of fancy prices, but the figure given will furnish one that will answer all purposes. The windows may be very neatly and prettily furnished for \$2.50 each, for shades and draperies. Pretty Japanese cretonne or lawn makes cool, charming and very inexpensive curtains. Goods of this sort may cost 10 cents per yard, and six yards will do for a single window. Shades will cost 75 cents per window, rollers and all. Pattern curtains in cheaper Nottingham lace may often be found at bargains, especially in cities and large towns. These will cost \$1.50 to \$2.50 per window, and will bring the price within the amount named.

An easy chair by a window in the dining-room is convenient. It will cost \$4.50 to \$12, according to its quality. A plain rocker of good size and make may be had for the former price; one with upholstery plain and substantial, will cost any price from \$8 to \$25.

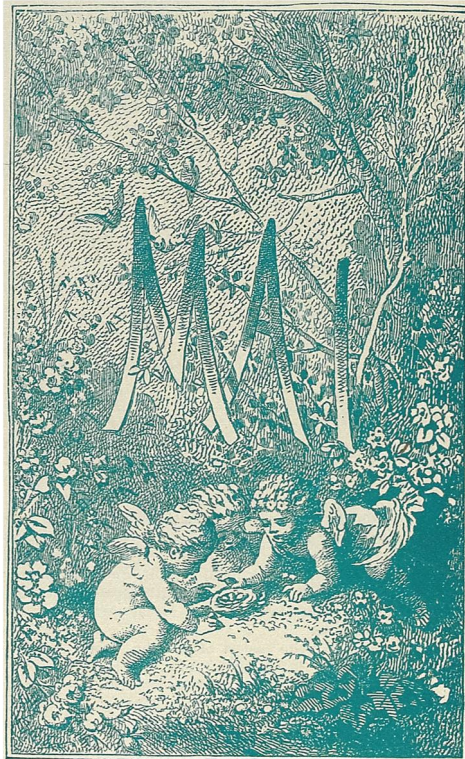
It is often convenient and desirable to keep the sewing-machine in the dining-room, and in small families this is a good place. This room may also be used as a study or reading room for the young people. If there are lessons to be learned the dining table is an excellent gathering point. A convenient but not indispensable accessory is a hanging lamp with a reflecting shade. This has its advantages in safety if games are to be played. Lamps with hanging chains, which allow it to be raised or lowered at pleasure, are very desirable. They cost \$4.50 to \$12, or more for higher grades of decoration, etc., but give no better satisfaction.

In many cases where there are large families the sitting-room

is utilized as a family bedroom, especially while the children are young. There is ordinarily an alcove or recess partly enclosed in which is the bed, and which should be draped by curtains falling from rods fastened by hooks to the ceiling. A screen made of plain strips of wood may be covered with plain cretonne or cambric, and fastened either by hinges of metal, or strips of strong cloth. It may be covered with Japanese pictures or illustrations from any of the popular periodicals, and can be very ornamental. It need cost but a trifle for the lumber, and any ingenious boy or girl can make the frame and the cover.

This room may be comfortably furnished for about \$100, all of the articles being new, or less if a slightly inferior quality of some articles is selected.

A good ingrain carpet will cost about \$25 for a moderately large room. A good walnut bedstead will be at least \$20. Mattresses cost all the way from \$4.50 for husk with cotton top, to \$8 or \$10 for those made of palm leaf fibres with hair top, or all hair at \$25 to \$30. The palm leaf and hair will be found the most desirable of all low priced goods. Springs may be had in an almost endless variety of patterns. Probably the most comfortable, and certainly the cheapest and most durable of all springs are those that may be attached singly to the slats of the bedstead. They are a half spiral with a spring catch made by turning a point of the wire of which the spring is made. They are of all springs the most manageable, taking up scarcely any room when not in use. Indeed the purchaser might carry home enough springs for a double bed in one hand without being burdened. Just why they are not to be found in general stores can only be accounted for on the theory that if they once came into general use the ordinary spring beds would be in but little demand. Certain it is that many dealers not only do not keep them, but disclaim all knowledge of them until information is insisted on. They are then, however, profoundly ignorant of any place where they may be obtained. Three or four chairs for the sitting-room will cost \$8 to \$12, according to quality. A cheffonier of large size costs \$18 to \$22, a small one may be bought for \$15. A dressing-case in addition to the cheffonier may be convenient, or what is better still, an old fashioned bureau with wide, deep drawers. One of these can almost always be bought for a very low price. A good mirror is indispensable, as there is always more or less fitting and fixing to be done in families where there are growing children. The mirror need cost no more than \$10. A lounge is one of the usual belongings of a sitting-room. A very excellent and inexpensive article of this sort can be made by using an ordinary frame, putting slats



MAY.
A MONTHLY SERIES OF PANEL SKETCHES, BY F. L. PENET.

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across it, and using the springs described. Over this put a mattress made of moss, husks, or any of the materials ordinarily used for seed purposes. A tick filled with fresh oat straw, tacked through and through, or fastened with a sort of quilting stitch in heavy cord, will be very comfortable and cost the merest trifle for the ticking. Every housekeeper should have a mattress needle and know how to use it. Instead of the straw bed, which becomes broken and uncomfortable, she may make straw mattresses which are far more convenient and desirable.

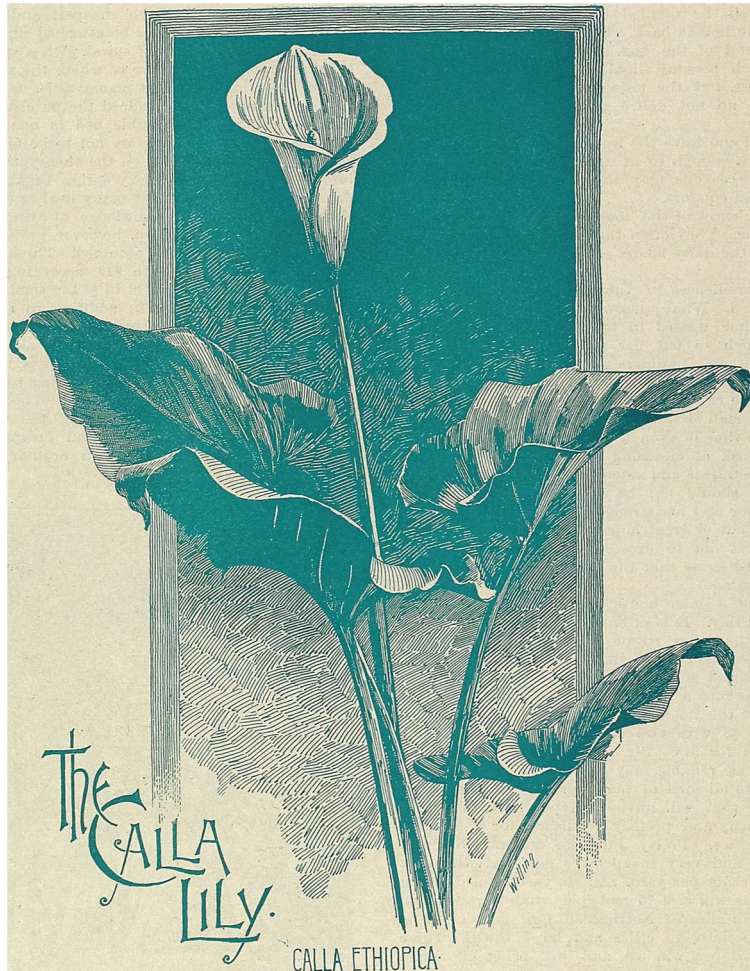
An ordinary sleeping room may be fitted up at a very moderate price. \$35 will go very far toward making the occupant comfortable, and from this starting point all manner of convenient things may be added according to means and fancy. A couple of rugs, home made, from pieces that always accumulate in a family, will temporarily supply the place of a carpet. The bedstead and bureau need not cost over \$20 for the two pieces. The washstand may be made from a dry goods packing case,

for \$40 to \$60—a very good one—or if the inclination and means permits, a better one may be selected. A good table will cost \$8 to \$12; for the latter figure an excellent quality and pattern may be chosen.

The mantel is always draped nowadays, and the materials for this should be bought and made up. Curtains and shades must be put up. Shades cost 85 cents per window. Good curtains may be bought for \$3 to \$12 per window, the latter figure buying those of excellent style and pattern. From this beginning the ingenious housewife may decorate at her pleasure.

The hall and stairs will cost but little for furnishing. Directions will be given for making hat racks, umbrella stands, stair pads, and all of the odds and ends of furnishing, which are not perhaps so expensive in themselves, but make a large item when the footing up comes, and which may easily be saved to the judicious housekeeper.

Good stair carpet in ingrain may be bought for 50 cents to



that may be had at the nearest store. Cover it with cretonne, fasten a couple of blocks of wood underneath it, make holes and set ordinary casters in them, and it may be moved at pleasure, which the ordinary washstand cannot be. One or two chairs will cost \$1.50 or \$2.50, and very comfortable and convenient stools and ottomans may be constructed with boxes, cretonne, ingenuity and the directions given in the Home Workshop department of this magazine.

The parlor is probably the easiest of all the rooms to furnish. It is always more or less conventional, especially in country houses. A good carpet for an average sized room will cost not far from \$45. It can be more or less according to circumstances. It can be made with a rug, with the margin of the floor stained or finished by a new and pretty process, which costs almost nothing but a little time and labor, and which will be described in another number. The parlor suite may be had

75 cents per yard. The hall carpet may match, and will cost about the same. Some housekeepers get regular floor carpeting for stairs and hall alike. If the stairs are full three feet wide this is a good plan. One end of the carpet should be left about half a yard longer than required; then if two or three times during the season the tacks are taken out and the carpet changed in position a few inches it may be made to wear very smoothly.

This estimate comes considerably within the \$400. It leaves margin for bedding and linen, of which nearly all families have a supply. It gives a family bedroom and one extra. If there is on hand a store of fairly good articles the purchases may be selected from better materials or may be added to at pleasure. With ingenuity and patience and attention to instructions, some even of this amount may be saved and better articles will be the result. There is therefore hope for the housekeeper who starts in on \$400 to fit up her home.